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Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée

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ONTARIO GOVERNMENT REDUCING HEALTH CARE WAIT TIMES

New Wait Time Data Shows Double-Digit Drops in the South East Area

TORONTO – New data shows the Ontario government's Wait Time Strategy is resulting in decreases in wait times for key health services in the South East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) area, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"Trends in the South East LHIN area are encouraging with significant decreases in wait times for a number of key health services," Smitherman said. "Through the leadership and hard work of thousands of front line health professionals, the Wait Time Strategy is clearly achieving real results for patients by improving access to care, closer to home."

As a result of the government's Wait Time Strategy, wait times in which nine out of 10 patients have completed their surgery or have had their exam in the South East LHIN area have decreased significantly since August/September 2005 by:

- 59.7 per cent for cataract surgery (194 days)
- 58.7 per cent for angiography (35 days)
- 24.6 per cent for cardiac bypass surgery (14 days)
- 21.4 per cent for cancer surgery (15 days)
- 15.7 per cent for angioplasty (three days).

Wait times for other key health services have also declined by:

- 8.3 per cent for hip replacement (26 days)
- 6.9 per cent for knee replacement (27 days).

Since the launch of the Wait Time Strategy, the Ontario government has invested $32,513,348 for additional procedures in hospitals in the South East LHIN area, including:

- 3,613 cataract surgeries ($3,131,800)
- 7,442 cardiac procedures ($18,897,105)
- 983 hip and knee joint replacements ($7,359,780)
- 452 cancer surgeries ($2,333,963)
- 1,572 hours, 2,358 exams MRI ($468,900)
- 1,287 hours, 4,505 exams CT ($321,800).

The new wait time data is available at www.ontariowaittimes.com, which is closing in on nearly 4 million hits as of today.

"The hospitals in the South East LHIN have been very successful at managing Wait Times for cataract,

cardiac, and cancer surgery," said Paul Huras, CEO of the South East LHIN. "Our wait times are within the top three in the province in these areas. However, with our aging population and the related potential increase in demand, as well as ongoing pressures on hospital resources such as critical care bed capacity, we must continue to work together to maintain and even improve on these positive results."

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait time and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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